



# News Release

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Release No.08-007

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Date: May 7, 2008

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## Water Management Monthly News Release

OMAHA – April saw significant rain in the lower Missouri River basin, but the plains in Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota remain very dry. Inflow into the three large upper reservoirs averaged only 33 percent of normal.

The snowpack in the Rocky Mountains peaked in late-April slightly above normal. Above Fort Peck, it topped at 111 percent of normal, and 110 percent in the reach between Fort Peck and Garrison, essentially the Yellowstone River basin.

“Cool temperatures have slowed the melt of the mountain snowpack,” said Larry Cieslik, Chief of the Water Management office here. “This, coupled with the very dry plains, has impacted our ability to keep rising water levels in each of the big reservoirs during the forage fish spawn this spring. The forage base is what supports game fish such as walleye and salmon.”

Garrison, the favored reservoir this year, declined half a foot in the second half of April, despite efforts to maintain a steady or rising water level. This included higher releases from Fort Peck and lower releases from Garrison. The Corps did not implement additional reductions because of potential impacts to municipal water intakes and the walleye fishery in the river below the dam.

“We have seen more rain in the Garrison drainage and the mountain snowmelt has begun, so we expect to be able to keep the reservoir steady to rising through the remainder of the smelt spawn in May,” said Cieslik.

Runoff for 2008 is forecast to total 20 million acre feet (MAF). The storage in the reservoirs was 37.1 MAF on the first of the month, 0.5 MAF higher than last year at this time. The May spring pulse from Gavins Point Dam will not be conducted this year because storage was below the preclude level of 40 MAF on May 1.

The Missouri River navigation season opened at St. Louis, Mo., April 1. Because of the low system storage, only minimum service flow support will be provided this year for navigation and other downstream uses. Forecasts show that the season will be shortened by 30 to 58 days. The final decision on season length will be made following the storage check on July 1.

The releases from a number of the reservoirs will again be regulated from late spring through most of the summer to protect the nests and chicks of the least tern and piping plover. Both birds are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

Last year, the average release from the system set an all-time record low due to drought conservation measures and high downstream tributary inflow. Corps officials expect that releases will continue to be much-below average this year as efforts continue to conserve water during this extended drought.

Releases from Gavins Point Dam averaged 14,800 cfs in April. This is compared to the normal 25,500 cfs. Releases in May are expected to average 16,400 cfs, compared to the long-term average of 28,800 cfs. They will be adjusted as necessary if high downstream flows pose risks of low land flooding.

Fort Randall releases averaged 12,000 cfs in April. They will be adjusted in May as necessary to maintain Gavins Point reservoir near its desired elevation.

Big Bend reservoir will remain in its normal range of 1420 to 1421 feet. Releases will be adjusted to meet hydropower needs.

Oahe reservoir fell less than half a foot in April, ending at elevation 1582.8 feet msl. Releases in May will average 9,700 cfs, compared to the long-term average of 22,000 cfs. The reservoir is expected to rise nearly two feet, ending the month at 1584.5 feet. That is 20 feet below its normal elevation. The reservoir is currently nearly 7 feet higher than it was last year at this time.

Garrison releases averaged 12,500 cfs during April compared to the long-term average of 19,600 cfs. Releases will average 14,000 cfs during May, compared to the average of 19,200 cfs. Garrison reservoir ended April at 1807.3 feet. It is expected to rise nearly 2 feet this month, ending at 1809 feet, 26 feet below normal. The reservoir is currently 1.3 feet lower than last year at this time.

Fort Peck releases averaged 6,000 cfs in April, compared to the long-term average of 7,500 cfs, and will be maintained at 7,500 cfs this month, compared to the long-term average of 9,200 cfs. The reservoir fell half a foot in April, ending at elevation 2198.7 feet msl. It will rise 1.5 feet in May, ending the month at elevation 2200.2 feet, 30 feet below normal. It is currently 0.6 feet higher than last year at this time.

The six main stem power plants generated 424 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity in April, only 60 percent of normal because of lower pool levels and reduced releases from the dams. Total energy production for 2008 is forecasted to be 5.6 billion kWh, compared to the average of 10 billion kWh.

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**View daily and forecasted reservoir and river information on the Water Management section of the Northwestern Division homepage at [www.nwd.usace.army.mil](http://www.nwd.usace.army.mil).**

# MISSOURI RIVER MAINSTEM RESERVOIR DATA

	Pool Elevation (ft msl)		Water in Storage - 1,000 acre-feet		
	On April 30	Change in April	On April 30	% of 1967-2005 Average	Change in April
Fort Peck	2198.8	-0.4	8,795	61	-70
Garrison	1807.3	-0.3	10,340	60	-43
Oahe	1582.8	-0.4	12,311	68	-77
Big Bend	1420.0	-0.6	1,624	94	-28
Fort Randall	1356.8	+2.4	3,681	94	+205
Gavins Point	1207.1	+0.5	388	104	+14
			37,139	67	+1

## WATER RELEASES AND ENERGY GENERATION FOR APRIL

	Average Release in 1,000 cfs	Releases in 1,000 af	Generation in 1,000 MWh
Fort Peck	6.0	359	50
Garrison	12.5	744	93
Oahe	14.7	873	114
Big Bend	13.8	821	48
Fort Randall	12.0	711	78
Gavins Point	14.8	881	41
			424